



PRESS RELEASE

Baker-Polito Administration Announces Grants to Eight Conservation Districts

\$250,000 Awarded for Local Environmental Projects

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BOSTON — The Baker-Polito Administration today announced \$250,000 in grants to eight of Massachusetts' 13 conservation districts across the state through the Conservation District Grant Program.

Conservation districts are not-for-profit entities composed of locally elected boards dedicated to the conservation of natural resources within a region or area, that work cooperatively with municipal, state and federal agencies to preserve and protect natural resources at the local level by promoting best management land practices.

“Massachusetts’ Conservation Districts do important work to promote good land stewardship practices and implement critical local conservation projects throughout the Commonwealth,” **said Governor Charlie Baker**. “Through the Conservation District Grant Program, we are proud to provide the resources these districts need to help conserve their local natural resources.”

“The financial assistance provided to Conservation Districts provides important support for the great environmental work local groups are doing in their communities to protect the Commonwealth’s land, water and air for future generations,” **said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito**.

“Conservation Districts identify opportunities to improve the environment on a local level, and help ensure that the work gets done properly,” **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton**. “The funds awarded today will support the districts’ critical efforts to improve soil health, water quality and wildlife habitat.”

The Conservation District Grant Program, which was created last year, is funded by the 2014 Environmental Bond Bill and administered by the Division of Conservation Services’ (DCS) State Commission for Conservation of Soil, Water & Related Resources.

The following are the Conservation District grant recipients:

District	Description	Grant
Berkshire	Funds will be used to host three local conservation workshops for landowners and to strengthen and expand current programs.	\$7,000
Cape Cod	This project will help establish and maintain an up-to-date, prioritized inventory of Cape-wide coastal resource restoration projects. The inventory will help managers plan projects, maximize project benefits, and will serve as the basis for securing needed technical and financial assistance.	\$42,000
Dukes	This project will evaluate and take steps to reduce the impact of all farming activities within the watershed of the Tisbury Great Pond,	\$26,000

particularly from nitrogen loading that has been identified as a problem by the Massachusetts Estuaries Project.

Franklin	The Franklin District will partner with Field Geology Services to identify river areas most susceptible to erosion in the North River Watershed, focusing on the West Branch in order to fully complete the FY17 project.	\$42,000
Hampden/Hampshire	The Hampden/Hampshire District will organize local conservation projects and outreach work, including several farm tours. The district will also be working on water quality issues in the Lake Warner watershed in Hadley.	\$42,000
Middlesex	The Middlesex District will do outreach to urban agriculture groups and Agricultural Commissions and offer workshops to landowners interested in permanently protecting their land.	\$7,000
Plymouth	The Plymouth District will coordinate a comprehensive program to tackle the critical need for increased effort to address water quality and quantity.	\$42,000
Worcester	The Worcester Conservation District will provide technical assistance, outreach and education to Worcester County landowners, students and citizens to help them maintain soil health and protect water quality.	\$42,000

“Berkshire County does a phenomenal job preserving and protecting our natural resources through proper land management and various state and federal land conservation programs,” **said State Representative Smitty Pignatelli (D-Lenox), House Chair of the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture.** “This money will go a long way in ensuring that folks in the Berkshires can continue to properly manage and protect their lands so future generations have access to a clean, healthy environment full of open space. Thank you to the Baker-Polito Administration for establishing this grant program and for recognizing the importance of state and local officials working together to improve and protect our natural resources across the Commonwealth.”

“We are fortunate to have dedicated people who serve Conservation Districts across the Commonwealth protecting our natural resources,” **said State Senator Anne Gobi (D-Spencer), Senate Chair of the Joint**

Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture. “These grants will allow them to continue their important mission ensuring viability of all of our ecosystems.”

“Land conservation is critical to maintaining the natural resources which make our community so unique,” **said State Representative Todd Smola (R-Warren).** “I’m excited about the upcoming projects in our district as a result of this program.”

“I am very pleased to know that the Hampden & Hampshire Conservation Districts will be receiving funds through this grant program to support their ongoing work to preserve our vital natural resources in the Pioneer Valley,” **said State Senator Don Humason (R-Westfield).**


Conservation Districts in Massachusetts work closely with the USDA – Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), which recently announced \$10 million in funding to assist in the implementation of the Cape Cod District’s Water Resources Restoration Project.


“These district grants are so important in helping our local district partners maintain their capacity to develop and implement critical projects like the one on Cape Cod,” **said NRCS State Conservationist Christine Clark.**

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